Item: **09**

Reference: **11/00788/DEEM**

Applicant: **Mr Alan Davies**

Location: **20 - 30 High Street Barwell**

Proposal: **ALTERATIONS TO SHOP FRONTS**

Target Date: **7 December 2011**

Introduction:-

This application is to be considered at Planning Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, as the application has been submitted by the Council.

Application Proposal

This application seeks full planning permission for replacement shop fronts extending across 30 metres of the ground floor frontage of four shops known as 20, 22, 24, 28 and 30 High Street Barwell. The proposals involve the installation of traditional timber shop fronts to all of the shop units with the exception of 20 High Street which will retain its existing window frames constructed from UPVC. The remainder of the shop units will have new glazing installed which will be set within timber frames. It is also proposed to re-site the entrance door to 22 High Street to its most northerly point on the shop-front.

The Site and Surrounding Area

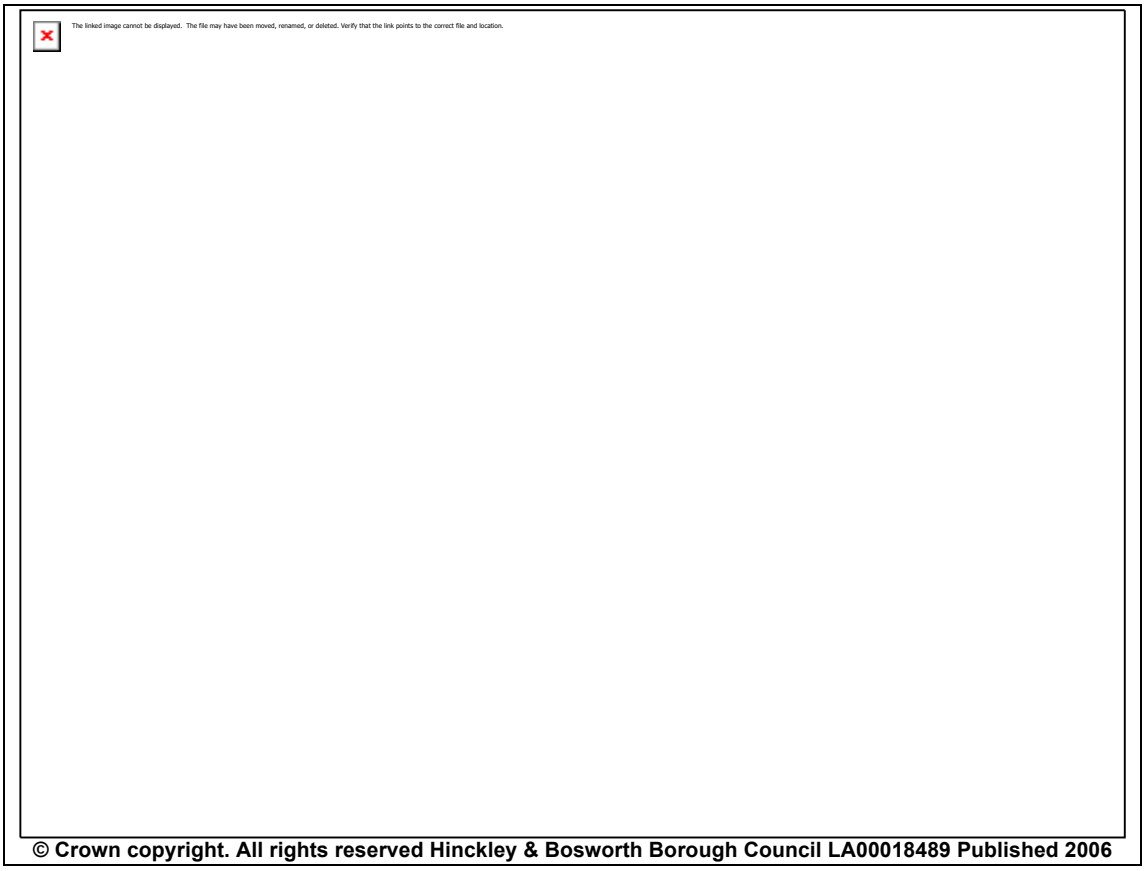
The four shop units are located in prominent position close to the centre of the settlement within the defined Barwell Local Shopping Centre and the Conservation Area. The shop units consist of a hairdressing salon (No 20), household goods shop (No 22), a newsagents/cycle shop (Nos 24 and 28) and a vacant unit (30 High Street). These premises are arranged in a terrace of two storey buildings with cream rendered upper floors and concrete roof tiles to 20 and 22 High Street with the remainder (24-30 High Street) being slate. The upper floor to 22 High Street has a protruding bay window and still retains some of its original terracotta detailing. The ridge height of 22 High Street is 0.5m higher than the adjacent roofs along the same terrace. The roof to 30 High Street has a projecting canopy gable which is finished in timber with a slate roof. All of the shop units front immediately onto the back edge of the highway footpath.

Technical Document submitted with application

A design and access statement has been submitted which states that the project to improve the shop units is a joint venture between a number of parties to improve the image of the High Street in Barwell. The statement sets out a short policy appraisal and states that the proposal is part of a comprehensive development to replace these poor quality shop frontages with shop fronts of traditional appearance and materials.

History:-

82/00635/4	Extension to existing hairdressing salon and formation of a self-contained flat over	
	Approved	21.09.82



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Consultations:-

No objection has been received from the Head of Community Services (Land Drainage).

Site notice and Press notice were displayed and neighbours notified. One letter of objection has been received raising the following issues:-

a) the shop owners cannot afford these alterations to the shop fronts
b) the costs associated with the shop front changes may result in shop closures
c) the money should be spent on alterative initiatives such as policing or anti-social behaviour
d) there are other ways of increasing footfall in Barwell.

At the time of writing this report no comments have been received from:-

Directorate of Chief Executive (Archaeology)
Barwell Parish Council.

The consultation period remains open at the time of writing this report and expires on 11 November 2011. Any representations received before the closing date will be reported and appraised as a late item.

Policy:-

National Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development sets out the Government's objectives for the planning system. The document states that high quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process.

Planning Policy Statement 5 - Planning for the Historic Environment sets out the Government's objectives on the conservation of the historic environment. It states that Local Planning Authorities should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any element of the historic environment that may be affected by the relevant proposal.

The draft National Planning Policy Framework was published for consultation on 25 July 2011. The inspector in a recent inquiry considered that although the draft was a material consideration he gave it little weight because it is a consultation and subject to change. This approach was accepted by the Secretary of State in a letter of 24 October 2011, in his consideration of the inspector's report. Officers will continue to advise on the progress of this consultation and update members on that progress.

Regional Policy Guidance

The Court of Appeal, in May 2011, gave judgment on an appeal by CALA Homes in relation to their continuing challenge to the SoS's proposal to abolish regional strategies. The Court confirmed that the Government's proposal to abolish regional strategies is a material planning consideration, but that is up to the LPA to decide what weight to give to the proposal in considering planning applications. The Localism Bill is still going through the Parliamentary process and the SoS has now confirmed that the actual revocation of any regional strategy will be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The view taken currently is that little if any weight should be given to the proposal to abolish regional strategies. This advice may change as the Bill progresses and officers will monitor the progress and report appropriately to committee.

East Midlands Regional Plan 2009

The East Midlands Regional Plan provides a broad development strategy for the east Midlands. The following relevant policies apply to this proposal:

Policy 1 outlines the regional core objectives, including protecting and enhancing the environment and improving employment opportunities.

Policy 2 promotes better design, including seeking design that reduces CO2 emissions.

Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009

Policy 3 requires new development to respect the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area by incorporating locally distinctive features of the conservation area into the development.

Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2001

Policy BE1 Design and Siting of Development states that planning permission for development proposals will be granted where they: complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area; ensure adequate highway visibility and parking standards; do not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring properties; incorporate landscaping to a high standard; and would not be prejudicial to the comprehensive development of a larger area of land of which the development forms part.

Policy BE7 requires new development to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area and to be in sympathy with the merits of neighbouring development.

Policy BE9 states that shop fronts within conservation areas that are attractive, of historic importance or contribute to the general character of the area should be retained. Where replacement is unavoidable only authentic and carefully detailed traditionally styled shop fronts will be permitted.

Policy RET6 states that planning permission for refurbished shop fronts will be granted where the shop front respects the local style, materials and the scale and proportion of the building and its neighbours and the fascia reflects the scale of the shop front and is not over dominant.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

The Shopping and Shop Fronts SPD provides an analysis of good shop front design and states that where replacement shop fronts are considered necessary, their design and detailing should enhance the building itself and the street scene in general. The document provides illustrative examples of good shop front designs.

The Barwell Conservation Area Appraisal identifies this row of shops as being significant local buildings and states that it is clear that some insensitive and low quality modern facades have been introduced and the detailing on the buildings is progressively being lost.

Appraisal:-

The main considerations with regards to this application are the design and appearance of the replacement shop fronts and enhancement or preservation of the Barwell Conservation Area.

Design and Appearance

The replacement shop fronts are of traditional design, appearance and materials with stallrisers, pilasters, transoms and fascia boards constructed from timber frames with well proportioned display windows set within timber mullions. The introduction of glazed display windows set within timber mullions ensures that all of the shop fronts have a uniform appearance. The height of the fascia boards to 24 and 30 High Street have been marginally increased by 0.1 metres and 0.2 metres, whilst the height of the fascia board to 22 High Street has been reduced by 0.6 metres and its width by 1.45 metres. It is considered that each of the fascia boards is proportionate to the scale of the shop-fronts and does not appear over-dominant. The design and appearance of the shop-fronts incorporates a number of the components of

traditional shop fronts illustrated in the Shopping and Shop Fronts SPD, these are considered to be key features of good shop-front design.

Enhancement or preservation of the Barwell Conservation Area

The proposed development has been considered by the council's conservation officer and agreed as being acceptable in principle. No objections have been raised by the conservation officer in relation to the design and scale of the proposed replacement shop fronts or to the materials of construction.

The existing shop fronts are constructed from a variety of materials with fascia boards of differing heights and are generally of a poor quality design and appearance. The height changes to the existing shop fascias are visually illustrated by the section of High Street between numbers 20, 22 and 24. The fascia to the hairdressing salon (20 High Street) is 0.4 metres in height and extends across the width of the unit, the fascia to the household goods shop (22 High Street) then increases to 1.1 metres bringing it level with the bottom of the first floor bay window. The top of the fascia board to the Newsagents (24 High Street) is then set below the bottom of the fascia to 22 High Street, thereby giving a varied appearance which is considered to be detrimental in visual terms to the character and appearance of the street scene and Conservation Area.

The proposed replacement shop-fronts will ensure that uniformity is provided to the street scene and to the conservation area with well proportioned display windows set within timber frames and timber stall risers. The introduction of smaller height timber fascia boards represents a departure from the large, non-traditional fascias that have progressively been added to premises along High Street within the Conservation Area, to the detriment of its character and appearance. The fascia boards proposed to each of the shop units are in proportion to the scale of the shop fronts and are not considered to appear over dominant to either the shop units or to the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area.

The top of the fascia boards to each shop unit will be located at a similar height from ground level. This means that the wider street scene along this section of High Street has been considered and each fascia board will be carefully aligned with the next, this is considered important in this case as the development is for a terrace of shop units.

Although the proposed shop fronts extend across the frontage of High Street for a distance of 30 metres it is important to note that careful consideration has been placed on the vertical division between each of the shop units as they appear within the street scene and more specifically to the design and appearance of the shop fronts themselves. This approach is mirrored in each of the shop units where the display windows are proposed to be set between timber mullions, thereby placing greater emphasis on the positive contribution that the inclusion of vertical divisional elements can have on the design of a shop front. This is demonstrated by the design and appearance of 24-28 High Street where it occupies two shop fronts and where its design is consistent with the guidance contained within the Shopping and Shop Fronts SPD which states that where a unit occupies more than one building, the vertical division should be retained in the shop front.

With regard to 20 High Street (hairdressing salon) it should be noted that the existing windows are set within a UPVC frame. Whilst the use of UPVC is not considered to be an acceptable design approach within a Conservation Area the proposals are to retain the existing glazing and plastic frames, thereby meaning that the glazed

sections of the shop-front will remain unaltered. The insertion of a new timber door which will retain its recessed position and timber shop front will help to frame the remainder of the shop-front; it will enhance the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area and will help to soften the visual impact of the UPVC window frames upon the street scene. On balance it is considered that the retention of these plain casement UPVC windows set within a timber frame doesn't warrant refusal of this planning application and that the wider context of shop-front improvements being proposed along High Street needs to be taken into account.

A condition will be imposed requesting details of the colour finish of the shop fronts to be provided. This will ensure that the development doesn't result in a terrace of shop fronts that all appear the same within the street scene and that the shop fronts are not finished in a colour which neither preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area.

Other issues

Neighbour Amenity

The proposed development is for replacement shop fronts and is not considered to give rise to loss of residential amenity to adjacent properties.

Alternative uses of funding/cost of works

The issues raised in relation to the costs of undertaking the shop front alterations, alterative uses of funding, alternative ways of increasing footfall into Barwell and the cost implications for shop owners are not material planning considerations and are not relevant to this case.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed replacement shop-fronts, by virtue of their design, siting and materials of construction will enhance the character and appearance of the defined Barwell Local Shopping Centre and Conservation Area. The key components proposed within the timber shop-fronts comply with the guidance for good shop design set out in the Shopping and Shop Fronts SPD and will re-introduce traditional shop fronts into the Barwell Conservation Area, thereby creating a more visually attractive shopping environment. The retention of the plain casement UPVC windows to 20 High Street are reflective of the design of the display windows to adjacent shop-fronts, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area.

RECOMMENDATION:- Permit subject to no new significant material objections being received prior to the expiry of the consultation period on 11 November 2011 and to the following conditions:-

Summary of Reasons for Recommendation and Relevant Development Plan Policies :

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area, representations received and relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the proposed development would be in accordance with the development plan, by virtue of their design, siting, scale and materials of construction will enhance the character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Area and would be in

accordance with the development plan subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this consent.

Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan (2001) :- Policies BE1, BE7, BE9 and RET6.

Hinckley and Bosworth Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) :- Policy 3.

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the submitted application details, as follows: Existing and Proposed Frontage Plans for 20-30 High Street, Barwell, Scale 1:50 (4 Plans), Typical Sections Plan, Scale 1:50 and Site Location Plan received on 12 October 2011.

3 Before any development commences, details of the colour finish to be used on the external elevations of all the shop fronts hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reasons:-

1 To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2 For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 To ensure that the development has a satisfactory external appearance to accord with policies BE1, BE7, BE9 and RET6 of the adopted Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan.

Notes to Applicant:-

1 Bats, nesting birds, great crested newts and certain other species are protected by law. If any such species are discovered before or during the works the works must be suspended and the local office of Natural England contacted for advice.

2 This permission does not grant approval under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended) for which a separate application may be required. You are advised to contact the Building Control Section.

3 As from 6 April 2008 this Authority are charging for the discharge of conditions in accordance with revised fee regulations which came into force on that date. Application forms to discharge conditions and further information can be found on the planning portal web site www.planningportal.gov.uk.

4 All works within the limits of the Highway with regard to the access shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Southern Area Manager (0116 3052202).

Contact Officer:- Scott Jackson Ext 5929